

In the Specification:

Please amend paragraph [0023] as follows:

[0023] Methods and examples of metal hardening procedures are disclosed in commonly assigned, U.S. Patent Nos. 6,093,303 issued July 25, 2000 for LOW TEMPERATURE CASE HARDENING PROCESSES; 6,165,597 issued on December 26, 2000 for SELECTIVE CASE HARDENING PROCESSES AT LOW TEMPERATURE; and 6,461,448 issued on October 8, 2002 for LOW TEMPERATURE CASE HARDENING PROCESSES, and commonly assigned, co-pending U.S. Patent Application No. 09/494,093 filed on January 28, 2000 for MODIFIED LOW TEMPERATURE CASE HARDENING PROCESS, which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety. Although the method of hardening described in the above-referenced patents is the preferred method, one skilled in the art should appreciate that other methods of case hardening, or carburization, such as, for example, nitriding, can be used to achieve similar results. Each of these processes can be used to case harden, selectively case harden or through harden the seat. In an exemplary case hardening process, low temperature carburization is carried out with a time-temperature profile that substantially prevents formation of carbides.